

**TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE**



FISCAL NOTE

SB 597 - HB 1136

March 30, 2011

SUMMARY OF BILL: Authorizes any registered voter who has either registered to vote in person, or who has voted in an election since registering to vote by mail, to request an absentee ballot and to vote by absentee ballot. Authorizes registered voters who are full-time residents of a licensed nursing home or similar licensed institute outside of their home county to apply for the permanent absentee voting register. Removes the ability for elderly voters and voters with disabilities, whose polling place is inaccessible, to vote at the election commission office on election day.

ESTIMATED FISCAL IMPACT:

Increase State Expenditures - \$1,118,400/FY11-12/Presidential Preference Primary

Increase Local Expenditures – \$2,236,800/FY12-13*
\$1,118,400/FY13-14*
\$2,236,800/FY14-15*

Assumptions:

- Currently, registered voters are authorized to vote by absentee ballot under specific circumstances, such as, absence from the county on election day, observance of a religious holiday, or serving as an election official.
- Under the bill, any registered voter will be allowed to register to vote by absentee ballot.
- According to a survey done by the Coordinator of Elections, counties looked at the cost to print additional absentee ballots due to the increase in the number of requests and the additional cost of mailing the absentee ballots to the voters. The process involved in mailing absentee ballots costs between \$0.88 and \$1.33 to mail the ballot to the voter.
- In addition, some counties anticipated the need to hire additional staff during the election period due to the increase in workload because of additional requests for ballots and an additional cost for their absentee counting boards.
- Costs varied by county based on the size of the county, the number of registered voters, and the specific needs of each county.
- Based on the results of the survey of counties, the statewide cost per election will be \$1,118,401.
- In FY11-12, there will be an increase in state expenditures of \$1,118,401 statewide due to the Presidential Preference Primary.

SB 597 - HB 1136

- In FY12-13 and FY14-15, there will be an increase in local expenditures of \$2,236,802 statewide due to the August and November general elections (\$1,118,401 x 2 elections).
- In FY13-14, there will be an increase in local expenditures of \$1,118,401 statewide due to the May Primary.

*Article II, Section 24 of the Tennessee Constitution provides that: *no law of general application shall impose increased expenditure requirements on cities or counties unless the General Assembly shall provide that the state share in the cost.*

CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



James W. White, Executive Director

/rct